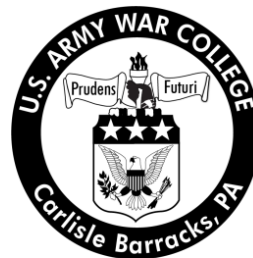# Strategy Research Project

International Fellow

European Security in the Balkans:
The Case of Macedonia

by

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Today European Union security policy provides a limited capacity for crisis management in the context of collective security. This capacity is primarily driven by the EU's largest powers. Hence this capability is influenced and biased by the interest of these powers. Consequently EU security policy toward the Western Balkans has been prejudiced and partial to the interests of the EU great powers. Instead of focusing on the emerging security problems in the Western Balkans, some EU members have became politically divided over the rising instability in the Balkans. The EU great powers, due to their biased interests, did not reach consensus on their policy toward the Western Balkans. It is important to understand the historical facts which occasioned instability in the Western Balkans in the early 1990s. Comparing complex historical events with present facts will help to evaluate the influence of the history on the current difficult political processes in the Western Balkans region. Full implementation of the EU enlargement policy and simultaneous integration of the Balkan states into the European Union is the key to the stability and security of the Western Balkans, and particularly in the Republic of Macedonia.

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European Security in the Balkans: The Case of Macedonia

As future crises arrive in steep waves, our leaders will realize that the world is not "modern" or "postmodern" but only a continuation of the ancient world.[1]

—Robert D. Kaplan

Geographically the Western Balkans region belong to Europe, but politically it remains disconnected. The European Union's Security Policy has failed to recognize, prevent, and subdue violent turmoil in the Western Balkans, particularly in the case of the Republic of Macedonia. In effect, the European Union (EU) has failed to integrate the Western Balkans region into the European Union. Its policies have ignored the historical circumstances that led to the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia.

The EU's Common Security and Defense Policy cites five distinctive threats to Europe today: terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, failed states, and organized crime.[2] This policy focuses on preventive diplomacy and preventive engagements that employ its members' political, economic, and military instruments of power.[3] This policy is designed to further strengthen the EU's political economic and cultural bonds and to build a credible military capability. But to succeed, this kind of security and defense policy depends on political and economic relationships within EU member states and on their national interests.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in the 1990s, the strategic situation in Europe changed more rapidly than it had in the past several decades. Since the Cold War ended, the communist threat to Western European states gradually decreased. NATO's role in Europe, led by the United States, was affected by the new political scenario. Because the United States no longer has a Cold War strategic interest in Europe, its political, economic, and military relations with the EU have dramatically changed.[4] In a

globalized world with emerging economic, political, and military powers like China, India and Brazil, the United States has shifted its enduring national interests to other regions. In fact, the United States in the future might not always have to take the lead in responding to future regional crises, especially in Europe. In all likelihood the United States will find it practical to support global coalitions in crisis management around the world. In many cases, interventions in failing states will require cooperative engagement among the United States and regional powers.[5]

From the other side, the EU was becoming a powerful economic and financial rival to the U.S. and wanted to develop its own military capabilities in order to project and promote European interests abroad.[6] European Union policy makers became convinced that Europe must unite in its security sector in order to play a major role in the international community. But cooperation in the security sector among European Union member states was obstructed from the beginning and domestic politics dominated European Union security policy.[7] Hence in the late 1990s, the EU was preoccupied with her own internal political affairs, and was not able to predict and prevent impending disorder in the Western Balkans. Thus the European Union was not capable of undertaking an effective preventive diplomatic and security effort to impede violent turmoil in the former Yugoslavia, although it had the capability to ward off the fighting and instability in the Western Balkans.

Balkan Security after Dissolution of Yugoslavia

In early 1991, after the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, six new states declared their independence. Newly elected political leaders used nationalistic rhetoric in order to disguise serious economic and social problems. Unsolved historical problems between ethnic groups, preserved by the communist system for many years,

arose in the 21st century once again. The EU policymakers failed to recognize the political, ethnic, and religious problems, which have existed for centuries in the region of Yugoslavia. The former Yugoslavia was a communist country, and therefore ideologically opposed to the Western European system. As a result the EU was not well informed about the violent events in the beginning of 1991 followed by ethnic clashes. In fact, some scholars have suggested that the global forces of neo-liberalism produced a tendency toward ethnic fragmentation in Yugoslavia.[8] "Neo-liberal economics situated Yugoslavia in a new periphery, in which local elites had to compete with each other for limited resources".[9] Therefore the process of dissolution of Yugoslavia could be seen as a direct result of a modern capitalism and its rigid market expansion and globalization.[10]

Following its own global interests, the EU did not follow the address its strategic security objectives which emphasizes "building security in our neighborhood".[11] According to this objective, neighboring countries who are engaged in the violent conflicts can pose problems to the EU, thus, "a ring of friends" and "well governed countries must be established".[12] This objective could be achieved through building partnership in the political, economic, cultural and security fields in the neighborhood. The Western Balkans have always been Europe's closest neighborhood, thus the employment of the EU security strategy was its first priority.

The absence of agreed security architecture encouraged some European member states to act outside of the common European policy toward the Balkan conflict.[13] Germany for example, during the dissolution of Yugoslavia, unilaterally recognized the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Slovenia on 23 December 1991, in part because Germany had devoted a great deal of its investment into Yugoslavia to

those two republics.[14] Greece unilaterally imposed a trade embargo on the Republic of Macedonia in February 1994 due to the fear of potential Macedonian territorial claims on Greek Macedonia, and successfully defended this embargo against the European Commission at the European Court of Justice.[15] The U.S. and Germany provided covert military support and materials to Bosnian Muslims and Croatia regardless of the EU and UN arms embargo.[16] France preferred to work with the Serbs in order to find a peaceful solution based on preservation of Yugoslavia as a single state. The EU officially wanted to maintain the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia, but behind the scenes, the EU Member States were politically divided.

Britain, France, Greece, and Spain supported continuance of the Yugoslav Federation in accord with the Helsinki Final Act Principles of inviolability of borders, which assures territorial integrity and advocates non-intervention in the internal affairs of a sovereign state.[17] Germany led a group more dedicated to the recognition of the breakaway republics. As a result the EU failed to act as a single entity in the Yugoslav crisis; instead, the EU member states found themselves involved in the Balkan clashes. Subsequently, EU policymakers, instead of finding a peaceful solution for the Balkan disputes, blinded by self-interests, gradually contributed to the escalation of the civil war in Yugoslavia.

Internal EU problems, its lack of coordinated effort, and member states' disagreement over military intervention in the Balkans severely hampered EU credibility in the Balkans. Britain and France could not agree over military intervention in Bosnia due to British opposition to the EU developing a military component.[18] Finally, the decisive American military intervention, which led to the Dayton Agreement, created

today's security environment and brought peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Dayton Agreement established a fundamental basis for future settlements, but it was not created as a final peace solution. Since then, the EU and its High Representative in Bosnia have not found an acceptable long-term solution. The situation in Bosnia is complex and unpredictable, especially in view of the possible intention of the "Republika Srpska" to separate from the Bosnian Federation.

The unresolved political situation in Bosnia-followed by crises in Albania in 1997, Kosovo in 1999, and the Republic of Macedonia in 2001 emphasized the EU's inability to fully implement its Security Policy. The uncoordinated political actions of some EU member states, and their biased behavior toward favored ethnic groups, initiated an antagonism between Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs recalling the problems from the past, when the Roman Empire was divided into Western Roman and Eastern Byzantine entities. Over time, it seems, those differences have become even deeper.

The collapse of the Byzantine Empire in the Balkans created an opportunity for the new emerging small Balkan Medieval states. The clash between the Serbs, Bulgarians and Greeks for hegemony in the Balkans continued into the Middle Ages and especially escalated in the 19th and 20th centuries following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The Balkan national states such as Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Albania, created in the 19th century, have based their political ideologies and mythologies on a medieval background.[19] At the same time the Great European powers of the 19th century have used these small Balkan states for their political interests. The Russians supported Serbia in order to spread their area of interest into the Balkan Peninsula; the Turks supported Bosnian Muslims and Albanians based on their religious

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beliefs; and Austria-Hungary and Germany supported the Croats. To make the situation even worse, Great European powers, in order to achieve their imperialistic objectives, have exploited ethnic and religious differences among Balkan populations to create instability and foment clashes between various ethnic groups in the Western Balkans. For example, the Habsburgs provided the Serb minority in Croatia with special privileges in order to provoke the Croats against Serbs.[20]

On the other hand, in the 19th century many Croats were attracted to the idea of a "South Slav" (Yugoslavia) with the independence of the Serbs from Austria-Hungary.[21] This sentiment became even more popular after 1908 when the Habsburgs annexed the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina and continued to rule with the same cruelty as their predecessors, the Turks.[22] From the religious point of view, after the creation of the Federation of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians in 1918, the Vatican was never happy with the fact that Catholic Croats lived in Yugoslavia rather than with their fellow Catholic Austrians and Hungarians. The Vatican enhanced anti-Serb feeling in Croatia because the Catholic Church, throughout history, had always aligned Orthodox Serbs with Orthodox (and later Communist) Russia.[23] Thus, European great powers in the past have played a significant role in creating and enhancing the differences between various nations and ethnic groups in the Western Balkan.

This situation continues even today with the selective process of integrating the Western Balkan States into the EU. EU foreign and security policy has been prejudiced by the security policies of its member states, some of whom had - and still have - a political interests in the Western Balkans. Thus, the European Powers in their political and security assumptions concerning the security situation in the region have developed

different approaches based on their economic and political interests. This is evident in the selective accession of the Balkan states into the European Union community following the EU enlargement policy. Consequently, EU security policy failed to predict and to prevent the ethnic clashes in the Western Balkans. EU policymakers, like their predecessors in the past, fail to anticipate the upcoming turmoil in the region; they have repeated the same ineffectual policies in the present by employing a selective policy of the EU enlargement, accepting the Western Balkan States one-by-one, instead of using a comprehensive regional approach.

With no specific timeline agenda, this policy of enlargement is already producing economic differences between the young democracies in the region, like the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania and the Republic of Macedonia. This policy of "selective accession to EU membership" has contributed to further economic inequality leading toward political instability and crisis. Once again, the same political players of "Old Europe" have been playing a key role in bringing together Western Balkan countries, or dividing them based on their economic, political, and religious beliefs.

The various historical events in the Western Balkan region shaped a region of ethnic complexity without a majority population concentrated in a large geographical area. The ethnic changes that happened during history in the Western Balkans could be used to explain the violent events that exploded at the beginning of 1991. Ethnic complexity is one of the reasons for the ethnic conflicts in view of increasing nationalism among Western Balkan states. However, today the historical arguments are only a source of confusion and instability when applied to the Western Balkan region. "The

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history of the peoples of Europe in the early Middle Ages cannot be used as an argument for or against any of the political, territorial and ideological moments of today."[24] It is common sense to begin with the present ethnic configuration in the Balkans as a starting point for the international solutions.[25] Otherwise, each party will continue to misuse history in order to justify its own political ambitions. "There is no solid argument today to determine the nationality of this or that region, especially in the Balkans, except the existence there of a recognized national majority."[26]

The key for the solution on the Western Balkan disputes lies in the hand of the EU policy makers and depend upon their will to apply the EU mechanisms for integration of the Western Balkans into the EU. The prospect of accession for the countries of the Western Balkans into the EU is a natural process because those countries had been part of a common European civilization. The EU enlargement to the Western Balkans could increase security and stability in a southern Europe in two ways. First, the enlargement process would cover the security vacuum in the Western Balkans, and second it will provide a better context for long term economic prosperity.[27] Further delay of the enlargement or application of the phased accession of the Western Balkan countries into the EU will increase instability in terms of creating environment for the rise of nationalism, crime and ethnic conflicts.

The Republic of Macedonia in Search of Security

The Republic of Macedonia declared its independence on September 8, 1991 and immediately found itself marginalized and isolated from the international community. One of the reasons for this international neglect was the unpredictable violence that developed in the other former Yugoslav Republics, especially in Croatia and Bosnia. Nationalistic leaders had risen to power in the region and immediately

grabbed the attention of the European Union policymakers. Another reason was the constitutional name of the "Republic of Macedonia", refused acknowledgment by the Republic of Greece due to the fear of potential territorial disputes over Greek Macedonia. Greece, therefore, by using its European Union membership as an advantage, imposed limitations on the larger aspiration of Macedonia to full international recognition. The problem with the name "Republic of Macedonia" still exists, in part as a consequence of the fact that the EU did little or nothing at all to find a reasonable solution which would be acceptable for both sides: the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Greece.

The problem is not solely a dilemma for the Republic of Macedonia; it is the problem of the European Union as well, due to the historical fact that the European Great Powers had aggravated this antagonism. Great powers used the Western Balkans region to promote their political interests and never considered Western Balkan states as partners until the late 1990s. The destiny of the Western Balkans was always created by outside political factors never taking into account the will and diversity of the Western Balkans population. During the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919 following World War I, the Great Power policy makers wanted to try to prevent the disintegration of Eastern Europe into smaller national states.[28] The demand for nation states, based on a single nationality, was not rational or realistic in the world of 1919. The British Foreign Office wanted to see minority groups assimilated into newly created states.[29] Hence the right of self-determination of the Macedonians after World War I was considered to be unacceptable due to the risk of encouraging other nationalistic self-determination movements in Europe like those of Irish, Flemish and Catalans. Instead,

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the Macedonians become part of Yugoslavia as an unrecognized entity. Thus, Great

European powers limited the idea of self-determination to suit their own hegemonic

interests. In the real world of international politics great powers have never been

committed to the ethnic or national objectives of the smaller states, especially when

these ideas come into conflict with their own geo-political interests.

After more than five centuries of Ottoman rule, Greeks, Serbs and Montenegrins

won independence from Turkish occupation.[30] Bulgarians, with help from Russia, had

defeated the Turkish forces in the summer of 1877 and in the same year had forced the

Ottomans to sign the Treaty of San Stefano, which created a Greater Bulgaria.[31] This

Bulgarian Kingdom included almost the whole region of geographical Macedonia,

including the present days Republic of Macedonia, part of present days northern

Greece and part of Albania. That was the first fuse to the "Balkan Powder Keg."[32] The

great European powers at that time, especially Germany with its ally Austria-Hungary,

and supported by England were not happy with the pro-Russian state of Bulgaria, so

they called for a new settlement. Under the guidance of the German Chancellor, Prince

Otto von Bismarck, the resolution took place in Berlin known as the Congress of

Berlin.[33] The result was the disbandment of the pro-Russian Bulgarian Kingdom and

return of Macedonia to direct Ottoman rule. That was the second fuse to the "Balkan

Powder Keg."[34] According to Thucydides, a completely amoral foreign policy is neither

practical nor prudent.[35] Once again Great European powers, guided by their self

interests and pride, had created a political crisis and source of instability in the Balkans

where they thought that they could act with impunity.

After the Berlin Congress in 1878, the situation in Macedonia had become even worse and culminated during the First Balkan War in 1912 when the coalition of Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria "liberated" Macedonia from Ottoman rule and divided its territory between them.[36] Each of these states had imposed its own political measures to control and assimilate the local Macedonian population. The First and Second World Wars did not solve the problems in Macedonia. During World War II Bulgarians joined Nazi Germany, reoccupied the Macedonian territory, and enforced "Bulgarisation" of the population repeating the assimilation and displacement practice of the Serbs and Greeks.[37]

Following World War II, under the cover of fighting the communists in "Northern" Greece, the Greek government expelled or assimilated the rest of the Macedonian population in today's Republic of Greece. Those forced migrations of the Macedonian population have dislocated the patterns of the Macedonian heritage in culture, politics, and economics, and have created the potential for further dislocations, troubles and instability. During the course of history, Macedonia suffered the most intensive ethnic series of changes, because all the Balkan powers, from the past to the present, wanted to conquer and rule Macedonia. The political ideas of Great Serbia, Great Bulgaria, Great Greece, Great Albania, and Great Macedonia still exist for modern nationalists. In the recent celebration of the Albanian 100 years of independence on 28 November 2012, the Albanian politician Sali Berisa in his speech called for unification of all Albanians. That statement immediately caused a reaction from the other Western Balkan states condemning the policy for generating ethnic instability.

After recognition of Kosovo as an independent state, Albanian nationalism has been in constant rise. With the recognition of Kosovo the international community led by the U.S. and EU, created another "fuse" to the Balkan Powder Keg in the 21st century. Since then, the Albanian nationalistic politicians in Albania, Kosovo and the Republic of Macedonia have been using nationalistic rhetoric to call for unification of all territories with Albanian populations in the Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Greece. This poses an imminent danger to the sovereignty of the Western Balkan states. Once again the solution rests in the EU common security and defense policy. The key is the EU enlargement policy which should aim for the simultaneous accession of the entire Western Balkans region. Further delay will encourage nationalistic leaders in the region and create a security vacuum in the "back door" of the European Union.

Following the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia and declaration of independence of the Republic of Macedonia the problems from the past still exist. It is an unavoidable destiny of the Western Balkans to depend on the policy of Great Powers. Thus EU security policy should play a prominent role in finding and creating a solution for the Western Balkan countries. The policy of ignorance and forced bilateral solutions will not solve a century long dispute, particularly between the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Greece.

In 2008, during the NATO summit in Bucharest, Romania, the Republic of Macedonia did not receive a deserved invitation to NATO membership due to the Republic of Greece's veto. EU and NATO officials explained that the bilateral dispute should be solved first between the two countries. Having in mind the involvement of EU security policy in the Western Balkans and particularly in the Republic of Macedonia,

from an ethical perspective this kind of policy could not be justified. EU policy makers, who have been playing a key role in the NATO decision making process, missed a historical opportunity to integrate the Republic of Macedonia into the NATO alliance, and thereby failed to improve and stabilize the security environment in the Western Balkans.

The disappointment of the Macedonian people and Macedonian government over the outcome of the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest led to a strengthening of nationalistic sentiment among the Macedonian nation. The EU policy had abandoned the Republic of Macedonia to a rising nationalism in Greece, Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia which further deepens the political problem and make negotiation over the name issue even more difficult. This EU double standard policy has created conditions for further deepening of the political disputes between the Republic of Macedonian and the Republic of Greece.

Nationalism is a powerful driving force in the Western Balkans, causing instability and crisis. Understanding nationalism and its effects in the Balkans is of crucial importance for understanding the fundamental roots of the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia. Today, nationalism is still a source for continuous ethnic tensions in the Western Balkans. Nationalism in the complex and ambiguous Balkan environment, has shown both its positive and negative force. In the past, positive Balkan nationalism has produced enduring state structures and has educated illiterate mass populations without financial expenses to those populations.[38] On the other side, negative Balkan nationalism has produced suffering for the geographically isolated ethnic minorities because hegemonic Balkan states wanted to integrate those ethnic communities into

their centralized national system. Very often in their political campaigns Balkan national leaders use the powerful force of nationalism in order to gain short-term political benefits causing long-term enduring damage to their national interests. Thus, the European Union policy should focus on the constructive, positive forces of nationalism for nation building. The EU's powerful civil society mechanisms could transform a negative Balkan energy into a positive and constructive force for rebuilding mutual trust and cooperation among various Balkan ethnic communities.

Official Greek policy continuously denies Macedonian accession to the EU and is therefore directly contributing to increasing nationalism in Macedonia. Macedonian public opinion was already affected by the Greek veto during the NATO summit in 2008 and the previous Greek economic blockade in 1994. This nationalistic sentiment is becoming even stronger among the Macedonian population due to the imposed limitations regarding the official use of the name Macedonia. This situation creates difficult conditions for the Macedonian government, which is trying to balance between increasing nationalism inside the Republic of Macedonia and the search for an acceptable political solution with the Greek government. Thus the EU should critically analyze its attitude toward this bilateral disagreement between the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Greece and immediately start a constructive policy seeking adequate resolution of this vitally important question.

The situation will continue to deteriorate and might encourage other Balkan states to once again assert their national aspirations over the Macedonian national name, cultural heritage, territory and language as fundamental characteristics of one nation. Again in the 21st century, as in 1912 and 1913, Greece and Bulgaria, supported

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by an ineffective EU policy, are threatening overall European and Western Balkan security. If the political pressure over the issue of the name of the Republic of Macedonia continues, the situation will give rise to increasing nationalism throughout the Western Balkans. That will make the accession process difficult if not almost impossible because problems from the past will arise once again, reinforced with the neo-nationalistic ambitions of new political leaders in the Western Balkan states.

The ineffective EU policy toward the Republic of Macedonia is undermining the current effort of the Macedonian government for successful internal economic and judicial reforms. Instead of encouraging positive development toward Macedonian integration in the EU, it is causing unpredictable events in the Republic of Macedonia leading to economic instability. The Republic of Macedonia will act to protect its dignity with preservation of the Macedonian name, cultural heritage and language. Greece's constant blocking of the Republic of Macedonian way to the EU and NATO, together with the EU's inconsistent and unresponsive policy toward the name issue, will cause further damage to the Macedonian economy. These prolonged conditions will certainly undermine the social and economic system in the Republic of Macedonia. With no EU membership, the Republic of Macedonia has limited access to EU development tools including favorable access to funds and investments. The whole economic situation will stagnate or even become worse. That is a favorable environment for rising nationalism with an undesired outcome-regional instability.

The Albanian population in Macedonia might become unsatisfied with the long-lasting disputes over the name issue, which they may consider not to be their problem. Instead, the nationalistic behavior of the Macedonian population might increase

nationalistic sentiment among the Albanian population inside Macedonia, which was the cause of the crisis in 2001. Hence EU policy makers must be aware of the consequences of their own policy toward Macedonia and the Western Balkans. There is an obvious, imminent need to act due to the immediate impact of rising nationalism in the Western Balkan states. The unsolved Macedonian situation might become a political issue among EU member states, which have different attitudes toward the Western Balkans and Macedonia based on their national interests. Further escalation of this political disagreement over the name issue will increase instability in the Western Balkans, and with that EU concerns over security in Europe. The safe ring of states around the EU's geographical borders will be affected. That will negatively affect EU policy in the other regions in the world and EU aspirations to become a more effective global player.

The EU must re-evaluate its security policy toward the Western Balkans. This process of evaluation is important for two reasons. The first is the need to identify the grounds for the political disagreement among EU member states toward the overall policy in the Balkans. The second is to create fundamental bases for an effective implementation of an EU security policy which will finally solve the security dilemma in the Western Balkans. With its soft power and diplomatic mechanisms, EU security policy is the key to reducing rising nationalism in the Balkans. Seeking unified understanding and unified actions toward the Western Balkan must be the EU priority in a short period of time. EU policymakers must synchronize and coordinate all governmental and nongovernmental activities among the EU member states in order to achieve unity of effort over security issues in the Western Balkans. Bilateral political

actions based on the national interests of some of the EU member states, must be directed toward common EU political objectives. A cycle of security issues in the Republic of Macedonia and in the Western Balkans builds security concerns in the region that require a unified EU understanding and effort. Otherwise the EU will show its own incapability to deal with the complex Balkan security and political issues due to a biased policy based upon double standards. The integration of Bulgaria and Romania in the European Union was based on the short term political interests of the EU - to create a safe ring toward Russia, not on the bases of the real political, economic and democratic reforms and achievement of those Balkan States. Now these Balkan states, acting as EU members, have been imposing their own wills and national interests in the Western Balkans. The EU must promote stability and reconstruction in the Western Balkans based on the common values of understanding and mutual trust among EU member states.

The EU, with its powerful political and economic instruments, has already developed a model of "preventive diplomacy" which was introduced to the Republic of Macedonia in the beginning of 1990 to prevent ethnic conflict.[39] Having in mind that the great powers are acting in the same ways as they were acting in the past, the model itself was insufficient, which resulted in ethnic clashes in 2001. By using a comprehensive approach to the whole region of the Western Balkan, the EU could reconsider its policy of enlargement and increase its civilian presence, which will gradually control the rise of nationalism and economic inequality.

The Republic of Macedonia will continue to build positive political and economic relationships with the neighboring countries, which together with its advanced internal

reforms represent Macedonia's strong commitment to EU membership. The EU has already established constructive political frameworks for an accession talks with the Republic of Macedonia and will continue to screen and monitor Macedonian internal reforms. However the political process of accession is undermined by an EU member state; Greece continues to force limitations to accession due to the bilateral disagreement over the use of the name Macedonia. Hence the EU must take a leading role in the political process and create an environment which will lead to a final, peaceful solution that is acceptable to both the Macedonian and Greek people. Active engagement by the EU will send a strong message to the political leadership in the Western Balkans and will further augment EU dedication to the security situation in the Balkans.

Conclusion

By focusing on its enlargement policy, the European Union has the capacity to accommodate the entire Western Balkan region at once into its organizational structure. That policy would give equal economic opportunities to various ethnic groups and establish the fundamental basis for a solution of the century long disputes based on different political, religious, and cultural values. The EU security policy is focused on political and economic actions rather than military initiative, which would help to restore confidence and mutual trust and understanding between various nations. It is an inevitable fact that Western Balkan states need assistance for building and maintaining new democratic societies. Because democratization is a slow and methodical process, it can generate weak and uncertain leaders before it generates stable organizations and it cannot be accomplished over night.[40] After the war over Kosovo, the UN administrator Bernard Kushner, announced: "You cannot change the mentality and the heart of a

person after centuries of difficulties, fights, hatred, in some weeks and months. It is not possible."[41]

The disputes over the name issue between the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Greece, as well as internal ethnic relationships in the Western Balkans, are not solely the problems of the Balkan nations. They are in fact European problems too.[42] Recognizing that fact, the EU should speed up the political, economic, and social integration processes in the Western Balkans. The Western Balkans can no longer be considered a peripheral region of central Europe.[43] Globalization and contemporary diplomatic relationships in the EU have created unique historical opportunities and hope for a final solution of the centuries long deputes in the Western Balkans.

A stable, peaceful, and cooperative Western Balkans region will be possible only through an aggressive enlargement policy by the European Union. In particular, this means engaging the Western Balkan states politically, culturally, and economically into the EU community. It is a moral responsibility of the EU policymakers to use historical momentum and finally integrate all of the Western Balkans into the European Union.

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